Supply of foodgrains for students in SC/ST hostels

767. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government supplies foodgrains for students who are studying in SC/ST/OBC hostels in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the foodgrains are being provided to students studying only in the States of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka since 2001-02; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) The Government allocates foodgrains to States/UTs under SC/ST/OBC Hostels Scheme for such students staying in hostels based on requests received from State/UT Governments. Allocations of foodgrains under this scheme were made in 2001-02 to 19 States/UTs including Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In subsequent years, allocations were issued mainly to Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka under this scheme based on request received. During 2008-09, foodgrains under the scheme have been allocated to Andhra Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland and Tripura.

Rise in the prices of foodgrains

†768.SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of foodgrains are increasing continuously;

(b) whether the production of wheat and rice has also increased; and

(c) the measures being adopted to control the prices of pulses as well as other foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No, Madam, There has been no continuous increase in prices of food grains especially Rice and Wheat. Government has taken several steps to check the increase in prices by taking effective measures such as augmenting domestic supplies of foodgrains through imports at zero/reduced rates of duty and ban on exports. Prices of foodgrains are either stable or declined. Across the 4 zones, the Retail prices and whole sale prices of Rice and wheat is more or less stable over the last six months.

(b) Yes, Madam, Since 2004-05 there has been increase in production of rice from 83.13 million tonnes to 96.69 million tonnes in 2007-08. The Third Advance Estimates of production sets rice production for 2008-09 at 99.37 million tonnes. The production of wheat has also increased from 68.64 million tonnes in 2004-05 to 78.57 million tonnes in 2007-08. The Third Advance Estimates sets wheat production for 2008-09 at 77.63 million tonnes.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(c) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers. The important steps taken are briefly listed:

A. Short Term Measures

1. **Fiscal Measures**

(i) Reducing import duties to zero - for wheat, pulses, edible oils (crude) and maize (under TRQ of 5 lakh tonnes per annum, beyond which 15% duty will apply).

2. **Administrative Measures**

(i) Export of wheat and wheat products (atta, maida and suji) was permitted after 15th May 2009, with a cap of 2 million tonnes in 2009-10.

(ii) Export not more than 20 lakh tonnes of rice, on diplomatic basis through the MEA to friendly countries in KMS 2008-09.

(iii) Banning export of non-basmati rice, wheat and pulses (except kabuli chana).

(iv) Imposition of stock limit orders in the case of paddy, rice, pulses.

(v) The periodic enhancements in MSP- currently Rs. 1080 per quintal for wheat, Rs.850 per quintal for common rice and Rs.880 per quintal for Grade A rice, to maximize procurement of wheat and rice, as well as give incentive to higher production.

(vi) Maintaining the Central Issue Price (CIP) for rice (at Rs. 5.65 per kg for BPL and Rs. 3 per kg. for AAY) and wheat (at Rs.4.15 per kg for BPL and Rs.2 per kg for AAY).

(vii) To augment availability of pulses, the Public Sector Undertakings (namely, STC, MMTC, and PEC) and NAFED were permitted to import and sell pulses under a scheme and losses, if any, up to 15% are reimbursed by the Government.

(viii) Distribution of imported pulses to State Governments at a subsidy of Rs.10/- per kg.

(ix) Futures trading in Rice, Wheat, Urad and Tur suspended by the Forward Market Commission in the year 2007-08 continued during the year 2008-09.

B. Medium Term Measures:

In the medium term, Government has taken initiatives such as the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) to improve production and productivity in agriculture.

Spurt in prices of pulses

†769.MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi